Having thus described the preferred embodiments, the invention is now claimed to be:

1. A method for backing up and restoring an application program including an application program configuration, the application program associated with a computer that includes an operating system with a common applications registry, the method comprising:

creating an image backup of one or more storage media that store files associated with the application program;

creating an initial application program backup of the application program including backing up files associated with the application program;

periodically inventorying the one or more storage media to detect a change in a file associated with the application program; and

responsive to a detected change, creating an update application program backup of the application program including backing up files associated with the application program.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the creating of an update application program backup does not overwrite the initial application program backup or any previous update application program backup.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein each application program backup is dated with a creation date.

4. The method as set forth in claim 3, further including:

deleting an application program backup having an oldest creation date of a plurality of application program backups responsive to both of:

a number of application program backups
exceeding a selected number, and

a time interval between a present date and the oldest creation date exceeding a selected time interval.

5.   The method as set forth in claim **3**, further including:

restoring the application program to a state corresponding to a selected creation date by copying information contained in an application program backup having the selected creation date onto the one or more storage media.

6.   The method as set forth in claim **5**, wherein the restoring further includes:

prior to the copying of information contained in the application program backup, copying the image backup onto the one or more storage media.

7.   The method as set forth in claim **1**, further including:

responsive to a detected change, categorizing the detected change as one of normal and suspicious; and

responsive to a suspicious detected change, notifying a human of the suspicious detected change.

8.   The method as set forth in claim **7**, further including:

responsive to a suspicious detected change, waiting to receive an approval from the human before creating the update application program backup.

9. The method as set forth in claim **1**, further including:

repeating the steps of creating an initial application program backup, periodically inventorying the one or more storage media to detect a change in a file associated with the application program, and creating an update application program backup responsive to a detected change for at least a second application program.

10. The method as set forth in claim **1**, wherein the step of periodically inventorying the one or more storage media to detect a change in a file associated with the application program is performed responsive to a regular operation of the computer.

11. The method as set forth in claim **1**, wherein:

the step of periodically inventorying further includes detecting a change in contents of a non-volatile memory which pertain to the application program; and

the step of creating an update application program backup further includes recording the contents of the non-volatile memory which pertain to the application program.

12. The method as set forth in claim **1**, wherein the files associated with the application program include the common applications registry, and the steps of creating an initial application program backup and of creating an update application program backup each further include:

recording entries of the common application registry that pertain to the application program.

13. The method as set forth in claim **1,** further including:

transferring the application program including the application program configuration to a second computer by copying information contained in an application program backup onto the one or more storage media that are accessible by the second computer.

14. A system for backing up and restoring an application program including an application program configuration, the application program associated with a computer that includes an operating system with a common applications registry, the system comprising:

an application program backup software program for creating an application program backup of the application program including copies of files associated with the application program that reside on one or more storage media and copies of entries of the common applications registry pertaining to the application program, the application program backup software program assigning a creation date to each created application program backup corresponding to a date of creation thereof;

a backup coordinating software program that invokes the application program backup software program to create an initial application program backup, periodically inventories the one or more storage media to detect one of a change in a file associated with the application program and a change in an entry of the common applications registry pertaining to the application program, and

invokes the application program backup software program to create an update application program backup responsive to a detected change; and

a restore software program for restoring the
5 application program to a state corresponding to a selected creation date by copying information contained in an application program backup having the selected creation date onto the one or more storage media.

15. The system as set forth in claim **14**, further
10 including:

an application program backup manager that deletes an application program backup responsive to:

a number of application program backups exceeding a selected number, and
15 a time interval between a present date and the creation date of the application program backup that exceeds a selected time interval.

16. The system as set forth in claim **14**, further including:
20 an image backup software program for creating an image backup of the one or more storage media; and

an image restore software program for copying the image backup onto the one or more storage media;

wherein upon initiation of execution of the restore
25 software program and responsive to a selected user input, the restore software program invokes the image restore software program prior to the copying of information contained in an application program backup onto the one or more storage media.

17. The system as set forth in claim **14**, wherein the computer is connected to a server system, and the application program backup is stored on the server system.

18. The system as set forth in claim **14**, further including:

an application program backup database accessed by the application program backup software program and the backup coordinating software program that identifies the files and the entries of the common applications registry that pertain to the application program.

19. The system as set forth in claim **18**, further including:

a second application program backup database accessed by the application program backup software program and the backup coordinating software program that identifies files and the entries of the common applications registry that pertain to a second application program, wherein the application program backup software program and the backup coordinating software program cooperate to periodically create an application program backup of the second application program responsive to a detected change in one of a file associated with the second application program and an entry of the common applications registry pertaining to the second application program.

20. The system as set forth in claim **14**, wherein the backup coordinating software program includes:

a change classifier that classifies a detected change as one of a normal change and a suspicious change; and

a user notification module that notifies a user of a detected suspicious change.

21. The system as set forth in claim **14**, wherein:

the backup coordinating software program further detects a change in contents of a non-volatile memory which pertain to the application program; and

the application program backup software program records the contents of the non-volatile memory which pertain to the application program in the created application program backup.